

Health Talk 0006 “Malaria”

Announcer: Welcome to “Health Talk”, where you’ll find “Good Advice for Good Health!” Now, here are Ty and Paula with today’s topic.

P: Hi there! Today on Health Talk we’re talking about malaria. Ty, what’s malaria?

T: Malaria is a disease caused by little bugs called parasites which usually enter the body through a mosquito bite. When a person is bitten by a malaria carrying mosquito, parasites from the mosquito enter the body, where they grow and multiply. Usually, malaria causes the person to have shivers and sweats, fever and chills, and flu like symptoms, such as muscle aches, headaches, diarrhoea, nausea and vomiting. These symptoms can take from ten days to three months to develop after they have been bitten. Also, the skin and eyes may become yellow or jaundiced.

P: There is another, more serious type of malaria, which must be treated quickly. This type of malaria can cause more severe symptoms including difficulty breathing or fluid in the lungs, and can even result in death. So, if you think you may have malaria, please get treatment as soon as possible!

T: That’s right! Most doctors or health care workers can perform a simple blood test to tell if you have malaria. If you do have malaria, treatment should begin as soon as possible, before the malaria becomes severe or life-threatening. Treatment will depend on the type of malaria you have, how old you are and how sick you are.

P: If people where you live have malaria, there are things you can do so that you don’t catch it. First, remove the places where mosquitos multiply. Mosquitos breed in water that is still, or stagnant, so it is important not to have stagnant water lying around, and to put covers on your water containers.

T: You can also look around the place where you live for objects that could catch rain water, then turn them over so they don't catch the water, or put a hole in the bottom so the water will drain away. Look for small pools of water that form after rain storms. Use a shovel or a stick to make drain channels so the water runs out of these small pools. This will reduce the number of places where mosquitos can breed.

P: After a mosquito lays its eggs in water, the eggs hatch and become wrigglers. You may have seen these as they come to the surface of the water to breathe. If you can't remove the stagnant water, put a thin layer of oil on it. The oil floats on the water and stops the wrigglers from coming to the surface to breathe, so they die. Or you could use an insecticide, a spray that kills mosquitos, in the same way. Just make sure the water is not going to be used for drinking or cooking. You can also spray an insecticide on the walls and ceilings of your home to kill mosquitos that come inside the house.

T: Mosquitos prefer to feed in the early morning and at night. They feed by biting people, so it is important to protect your skin at this time. Mosquitos are attracted to dark clothing, so at night, wear light coloured clothes with long sleeves and long legs which cover your wrists and ankles. If you have some mosquito repellent, spray or rub it on your skin to keep the mosquitos away.

P: While sleeping, use a net over your bed to keep the mosquitos from biting. You can also spray a little insecticide on the net to further help repel the mosquitos. Make sure the mosquito net is tucked in tightly so mosquitos can't get in. Show your children how to tuck their own nets in, and keep the net away from your body so the mosquitos can't bite you through the holes in the net.

Announcer: This has been "Health Talk," a production of HCJB Global Voice. For more "Good Advice for Good Health" stay tuned to this station, or log on to hcjbglobal.org.